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SPECIAL REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON CITY PROPERTY,
RELATIVE TO
SEDGELEY PARK.

To the Select and Common Councils
of the City of Philadelphia,

The Committee on City Property beg leave respectfully to
report:—

That they have had again under careful consideration the subject of Sedgeley Park and its presentation to the City of Philadelphia as the generous gift of a number of our most valued citizens. They have been induced thus to review their former action by the boldness and violence of the language in which the purity of the motives and the integrity of the conduct of the gentlemen who united in presenting this property to the city was assailed upon the floor of the Common Council at the meeting held on the 8th inst. Imputations like these, thrown out in the progress of heated discussion, and wholly unsustained except by violent declamation and reckless assertion, would, under ordinary circumstances, merit no further attention than the salutary rebuke administered to their author in the progress of the debate; but in this instance the Committee on City Property, which earnestly recommended the

acceptance of the gift, have felt that it was due alike to the committee; to the citizens who gave; and to the citizens who, in all time, may enjoy the noble gift, that assaults such as those which were made upon the motives and the characters of these generous citizens should have on the records of the Councils an unanswerable refutation.

Sedgeley Park, containing thirty-three acres, and adjoining Lemon Hill on the north, was presented to the city in the month of March, 1857, by citizens who voluntarily gave in cash \$60,000 towards its purchase, and then conveyed the premises, subject to the balance of the purchase money, (\$65,000,) as a free gift to the citizens of Philadelphia, to be used as a Park, in connection with Fairmount Park, for the health and enjoyment of all the people forever. In combination with the city grounds at Fairmount, which embrace 24 acres, Fairmount Park, which contains 45 acres, and the grounds of the Spring Garden Water Works, which contain $8\frac{1}{2}$ acres of ground, the Sedgeley Park estate forms a Park upon the bank of the Schuylkill of $110\frac{1}{2}$ acres, extending from Callowhill street on the south, (with the interruption of a small piece of wharf property at and adjacent to Coates street,) to a point more than a mile northward of the dam. Independently of the remarkable natural adaptation of these beautiful grounds to the purposes of a noble Park, they constitute the bank of the Schuylkill, and their possession by the city insures the purity of the water in the Fairmount basin, whose border they constitute for a mile above the dam.

It was the design of the citizens who presented these premises to gather by subscription the entire purchase money, but their efforts were not successful, and their original contract with Mr. Dreer, which contemplated the payment in cash of the entire purchase money, was modified so that the cash payment was placed at \$60,000, and the balance was suffered to remain on mortgage upon easy terms of payment. As the premises were free from encumbrance, in the hands of their owner, Mr. Dreer, with the exception of \$11,000, and they were to be presented to the city subject to \$65,000 of the purchase money, the balance of the encumbrance was divided into two parts, and charged upon different portions of the premises. To relieve the City of Philadelphia from giving her bonds for these balances of the purchase money, the pro-

mises were charged by Mr. Dreer himself with these two mortgages, (making, with the \$11,000 mortgage, the balance of the encumbrance, subject to which they were to be given to the city,) before he executed the deed. This was done with the full knowledge and previous approval of the Committee on City Property.

Such is the simple history of this noble gift to our citizens. In the list of the givers will be found the names of men whom we have been taught to regard as of the purest and best of our citizens, many of whom have won for themselves by long lives of probity and honor the confidence of all good men among us. Two of them—brothers—the worthy sons of an honored and faithful servant of the city of Philadelphia in her Councils—the late Thomas P. Cope—contributed each of them \$10,000; one of them an enlightened citizen of New York, having no interest in Philadelphia, gave \$500, and another, a citizen of New Jersey, \$100, and yet another, a Philadelphian by birth, but resident abroad for many years, sent \$1,000 as his contribution. We venture to assert, after the fullest inquiry, that a more noble act was never done by better men or from purer motives.

Under such circumstances the committee have been astonished beyond measure at the imputations made (they are happy however to believe only by one gentleman,) that any bad faith attended this transaction, or that it was in truth other than a most generous act, deserving the lasting gratitude of the city of Philadelphia. The committee have gathered together, and submit herewith in permanent form, proof the most ample of the wicked and calumnious falseness of the base imputations to which they have referred. This proof consists of the statements of Charles Megarge, F. J. Dreer, N. B. Browne, Frederic Graff, Geo. W. Biddle, Thos. Ridgway, Matthew Newkirk, Jas. Page, W. D. Kelley, Jno. Bonsall & Co., and of other gentlemen, all of which accompany this report, and which they earnestly recommend to the perusal and consideration of members of Councils. The proof addresses itself to the value of the property in money and to its yet greater value as a Park and as a security for the purity of the Schuylkill water to the city of Philadelphia—to the good faith of the subscriptions, and to the fact that all of them were honestly and in good faith paid precisely as they purported to have been made.

As to the value of the property itself Mr. Megarge states that by direction of two gentlemen, he offered in 1854, to Mr. Dreer, \$100,000 for the property; the purpose being to present it to the city, and that Mr. Dreer declined to sell at that price. Mr. Dreer substantiates the statement of Mr. Megarge on the subject, and also states that pending its sale to the gentlemen who in March last presented it to the city, he received and "refused offers by which a larger sum would have been realized than upon the original terms offered to the city." Mr. B. H. Yarnall states that on the western bank of the river opposite Sedgeley, where ground is of less value than upon this side, he sold as an executor, in 1854, large portions of ground at the rates of \$6,000, and of \$7,000 per acre, while the price paid for Sedgeley is less than \$4,000 per acre. Mr. P. F. Snyder, an experienced judge, says, "it is worth at least \$120,000." Mr. Matthew Newkirk says, "I have no hesitation in stating that, at the time of the purchase, I consider the land was worth double the amount of the existing mortgages upon it." Messrs. Bonsall & Co. say, "we are of opinion that the price paid to the late owner of that property was a fair one and not more than it was really worth; we have no doubt that prior to that purchase it could have been sold off in parcels for more money." The committee invite attention to these and to similar statements from competent judges of the highest respectability, which accompany this report, and which show, beyond honest doubt, the fairness of the price.

It would seem scarcely credible that an assertion should have been made, that the subscriptions were not real but "bogus," to use the language of the person who made this assertion. It would be an answer in this community to point to the names of the gentlemen who are so basely calumniated by such an insinuation. Yet, if an answer is needed, the statement of Mr. Thomas Ridgway, which accompanies this report, and also that of the Hon. N. B. Browne, and of several others will amply furnish it.

The committee invited Mr. Andrew Miller, member of Common Council from the Third Ward, and the author of the statements to which reference has been made, to meet with them and exhibit the proof of their truth. The correspondence with Mr. Miller accompanies this report.

He attended the committee, again repeated the statements, and stated the proof of their truth to be as follows, viz: That he had examined in the Recorder of Deeds office the deed by which Mr. Dreer acquired his title, and found that it bore date March 24, 1851, and expressed as its consideration \$26,750,* that he therefore *inferred* that it could not honestly be worth to the city, in 1857, \$125,000, and still further *inferred* that the alleged subscriptions of \$60,000 were "bogus," and that the one hundred and forty citizens of hitherto unquestioned good name, who professed to give the money, had not done so in fact, but had conspired with Mr. Dreer (to cheat and defraud the city by loaning their names to a pretended, but not real, subscription,) to put this property on the city at an enormous price. Mr. Miller admitted that he had stated on the floor of Councils that he had himself been asked to subscribe with the understanding that he was not to be called upon for his subscription, but now explained the statement by saying that at the time he understood it to mean that his subscription would not be asked for in cash until the list was full, but had *inferred since* he saw the deed to Mr. Dreer that an opposite and corrupt purpose existed in the statement then made to him.

The committee desire to state Mr. Miller's reasons fairly, and to leave them, in their unabated force, for the consideration of members of Councils. They desire to leave the whole subject upon the testimony without comment. They would be at a loss to give fitting expression to the impression it has made upon their own minds in view of the character of the gentlemen, who so nobly gave this property to the city of Philadelphia from motives the most pure and generous, and of the grounds upon which they have been assailed and maligned.

For themselves they have only to say, that they review their previous recommendation to Councils to accept this generous gift with feelings of the greatest satisfaction, and

* In April, 1836, Sedgely was purchased by J. S. Lloyd for \$80,500, and was subsequently let out upon ground rent by him for \$260,000. The ground rents became the property of Mr. Downer, of New York, who died leaving children, who sued out the arrearages of ground rent, and purchased the property at sheriff's sale. In 1851, being resident in another city, and the times being greatly depressed, they sold the premises to Mr. Dreer for \$26,750.

rejoice in the firm conviction that after times will recognize all who have been instrumental in effecting the addition of Sedgeley to Fairmount Park as public benefactors.

Respectfully submitted by

THEO. CUYLER, *Chairman.*
E. T. MOTT,
THOS. C. STEEL,
R. M'CAY, Jr.,
WM. NEAL,
WM. McFADDEN,
REED A. WILLIAMS,
STEPHEN BENTON.

October 15, 1857.

704 *Walnut Street*, October 10, 1857.

ANDREW MILLER, ESQ.,

SIR—I beg leave to address you as Chairman of the Committee on City Property, and to solicit from you as a member of the City Councils for the use of that Committee, the evidence which will sustain the truth of certain statements made by you on the floor of the Common Council last Thursday. You were understood to say when the Sedgeley Park Ordinance was under discussion that the whole scheme was one of fraud and deception, designed only to foist upon the City a property of small value at an enormous price. That many of the subscriptions pretended to have been made, were not real, and that the money never was, in truth, paid for them, and that you, yourself, had been asked to subscribe with the statement accompanying the request for your name—that you would not be asked or expected to pay your subscription.

The acceptance of this noble park by the City, was unanimously and earnestly recommended by the Committee on City Property, as they believed, with full knowledge of every fact and circumstance attending what they supposed to be an act of noble generosity on the part of some of the best and purest men we have among our citizens.

I cannot suppose that any gentleman would make statements such as those I have quoted from your remarks, unless he had evidence of their truth. If they are true, the committee which recommended the acceptance of the gift will glve most respectful consideration to any proof of their truth, and will unite with you in efforts to undo what has already been done.

I beg leave to inform you that the committee will be in session at the Select Council Chamber, on Monday afternoon the 11th instant, at 4 o'clock, and will be pleased either to meet you in person, or to receive any communication you may send.

Respectfully yours,

THEO. CUYLER,

Chairman, &c.

206 South Fifth Street, October 12, 1857, 2 P. M.

THEO. CUYLER, ESQ.,

SIR—I received about two hours ago, your note of the 10th, concerning what I have said in Common Council, in relation to the pretended purchase by the City, of the Sedgeley Estate. I have not said all that is in your note, imputed to me, nor do I remember using, at any time, the language therein set forth.

But I am willing, and I desire to appear before the Committee on City Property, to which you invite me, and to be examined under oath, where I think I can show a series of facts that will convince any *disinterested* mind, that the whole proceeding in relation to the purchase of Sedgeley, is founded upon an attempt to perpetrate a most foul fraud upon the Tax Payers of Philadelphia.

I have an engagement at half past three this afternoon, but will make every effort to be in the Committee Room by half-past four, at latest.

Very respectfully, etc.,

ANDREW MILLER.

THEO. CUYLER, ESQ.,

Chairman, &c.

October 13, 1857.

ANDREW MILLER, ESQ.,

DEAR SIR—The Committee on City Property, will again be in session at the Select Council Chamber, on Wednesday afternoon, (to-morrow,) at 3½ o'clock, P. M., and I am instructed by the Committee again to extend to you the invitation of my former note.

Very respectfully,

THEO. CUYLER,

Chairman.

To THEO. CUYLER, ESQ.,

Chairman of the Committee on City Property.

DEAR SIR,—In answer to yours of the 10th, I would state that I had never offered the Sedgeley Property for sale; that my intention in regard to it was to hold it until I deemed it

a proper time to divide it up into lots. I, however, in the year 1854, yielded to the wishes of the Committee on City Property, and fixed the price of the same at \$150,000, payable at the end of five years. This was the lowest price which I had ever intended to accept for the property—as from the offers which had from time to time been made to me for portions of the ground, I felt satisfied it would yield me a much larger sum by selling out in lots.

In April, 1856, I received through Mr. Charles Megarge, an offer of one hundred thousand dollars from private parties; this offer I declined.

In the month of November, 1856, I was again approached by a committee of citizens and requested to fix the lowest price at which I would sell for the purpose of adding it to Lemon Hill for a Public Park. It was then stated to me that the design was to purchase by private subscription. In view of the manner and object of the purchase, I was induced to fix my price at \$125,000, and agreed to become a contributor to the object in \$5,000; upon these terms the purchase was closed in April last. The purchase was made subject to the acceptance of the property by the city, and was upon its acceptance completed by the payment of the purchase money and the execution of the deed.

As to the value of the property, I would state that during these negotiations, I refused offers by which a larger sum would have been realized than upon the original terms offered to the city, but I had determined not to sell at that time, and yielded only in consideration of the purpose for which the property was sold.

I am respectfully yours,

FER'D J. DREER.

October 12, 1857.

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TO THEODORE CUYLER, Esq.,

Chairman of the Committee on City Property.

DEAR SIR,—In 1855, I was a member of Common Council from Twenty-first ward, and on the Committee of City Property. Two propositions were before the committee at that time, one was to form a Park at Fairmount extending along

the river to the Spring Garden Water Works. The committee regarded this as the most central spot that could be obtained for the purpose, and looking to the great advantage it would be to our drinking water, recommended the leasing of the property for five years, the city to pay for the land at the end of the lease, the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. These were the best terms that could at that time be effected. It gave the city a truly beautiful park of some one hundred acres at a cost comparatively small when the great advantages to be derived from it should be taken into consideration. The recommendation of the committee was adopted by Select Council, but no action at that time was taken by Common Council. Some time subsequently to this, I was authorized by two citizens of Philadelphia to negotiate for the purchase of the land on their account, and they authorized me to give one hundred thousand dollars for the property. I was very anxious to consummate this purchase at the price named, but my offers were declined by Mr. Dreer, as he considered the property at the time worth far more than my offer.

When the friends of the Park started the plan of securing it by a public contribution, I cheerfully became a subscriber with a full knowledge of all the circumstances I have mentioned.

Very truly yours,

CHARLES MEGARGE,

Sixth and Carpenter Streets.

October 10, 1857.

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TO THEODORE CUYLER, ESQ.,

I am well acquainted with the land formerly the Sedgeley Park Estate, now belonging to the city of Philadelphia, and forming the northern portion of Fairmount Park. I, myself, own property in that vicinity, and I have no hesitation in stating that at the time of the purchase, I consider the land was worth double the amount of the existing mortgages upon it. When the subscriptions were made by citizens toward the purchase, with a full knowledge and approval of the same, I became a contributor to the fund in \$5000.

M. NEWKIRK.

Philadelphia, Oct. 13, 1857.

THEODORE CUYLER, ESQ.,

DEAR SIR:—In answer to yours, we have to say that, from our knowledge of the value of the Sedgeley Estate, now forming part of Fairmount Park, we are of opinion that the price paid to the late owner of that property was a fair one, and not more than it was really worth. We have no doubt that, prior to that purchase it could have been sold off in parcels, for more money. It is quite certain that the addition of Sedgeley has immensely enhanced the value of Lemon Hill as a pleasure ground or park. By this addition Lemon Hill has been brought up to Girard avenue, and thus thrown open to the people of the northern part of Philadelphia, and to those west of the Schuylkill. It would be perfect madness to attempt to destroy it, and we think no gentleman would entertain such a thought, who had given the matter any serious reflection.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN BONSALE & CO.,

Conveyancers.

TO THEODORE CUYLER, ESQ.,

Chairman of the Committee on City Property,

About the year 1854, I, as one of the executors of the estate of Ellis Yarnall, deceased, sold to Birkenpine & Trotter a lot of ground on the Schuylkill, nearly opposite Sedgeley, 175 feet front, and 375 feet deep, for the sum of nine thousand dollars, being at the rate of six thousand dollars per acre, there were no improvements on the said lot. The executors, also, before this, sold a lot of ground adjoining on the river at the rate of about seven thousand dollars per acre. My father sold two lots of ground adjoining on the north, at the same rate, that is about $1 \frac{50}{100}$ dollars per foot. I was not a subscriber to the fund for the purchase of Sedgeley Park, and therefore made no examination at the time of its purchase as to its value, but have no doubt, as well from the facts I have stated as from my knowledge of the property, that the price paid was its fair and proper value.

B. H. YARNALL.

Philadelphia, Oct. 13, 1857.

No. 113 South Fifth street, Philadelphia.

TO THEODORE CUYLER, ESQ.

Chairman of Committee &c.

DEAR SIR:—I have examined a plan of the Sedgely estate, divided into building lots, and am of opinion that it is worth at least \$120,000; and that its advantages as a Park for the People, are almost unparalleled.

Respectfully yours &c.,

PHILIP F. SNYDER.

—

SENATE CHAMBER *October 12, 1857.*

MY DEAR SIR:—In answer to your note in reference to the subscriptions for the purchase of the land now forming the Northern part of Fairmount Park, I can only say that the amount Contributed by myself, \$1000 was paid in cash to Mr. Ridgway, the Treasurer of the fund.

This was upon the solemn pledge in the ordinance of the 16th, of April last, that the City would assume the balance of the purchase money, and hold the ground thus acquired, not merely for the preservation of the purity of the Schuylkill water, but as a Park for the free and common use and enjoyment of the people forever.

On examination of the premises, I was then satisfied that the price at which the Contributors obtained it, was quite moderate, and bore no reasonable comparison to the advantages accruing to the public from its possession.

In Common with the other contributors I shall feel deeply disappointed, if by the action of Councils, this property shall be sacrificed, and diverted to other uses.

Such a result would involve as much dishonor to the City of Philadelphia, as a repudiation of her loans.

I am very truly &c.,

N. B. BROWNE.

THEODORE CUYLER, ESQ.,

Chairman of Committee of City Property.

Philadelphia, Oct. 12, 1857.

TO THEODORE CUTLER, ESQ.,

Chairman Committee on City Property.

DEAR SIR:—In view of the present and future purity of the Schnylkill water supplied to our citizens from Fairmount, I certainly consider it of vital importance that the city should retain the entire control by ownership of the shores immediately bordering upon the pool formed by the dam.

The impurities thrown out from the shores upon the south side have at present a pretty good chance of finding their way into the thread of the stream, and being carried over the dam, or of passing through the canal to the river below. This is not the case with those from the Sedgely Park side of the river, they cannot be sufficiently deflected from the banks to reach the rapid current of the river, but hug the shores as such matters generally will, and are carried almost directly toward the mouth of the forebay of the Water Works, there to be pumped up and supplied to our citizens.

The very judicious purchase of the property on that shore exhibited commendable foresight, and I much regret to hear any doubt expressed of its remaining entire in the hands of the city corporation forever.

I consider the retention of the Sedgely Park portion of it to be of the utmost consequence; inspection of the whole river front of that estate, from Girard Avenue Bridge to Pratt's Point, will show that it forms a deeply indented cove, the river thereby becoming much wider at that spot causes a sluggish retardation of the current at the shores, by no means calculated to carry off such impure matter as would be discharged from dye-houses, breweries, slaughter-houses, or similar establishments, such as may be built upon the property should the city be induced to abandon its ownership.

Such a cove as is here formed will retain these impurities for a longer or shorter time according to the height of the water upon the dam, and will in fact form a natural receiving reservoir from which a new supply of impure matter would be constantly, slowly but surely distributed and conducted to the forebay of the Water Works.

That this would be the natural result, I think any one can

convince himself by an inspection of the formation of the shores at this place.

It is to be hoped that the city will allow no consideration to deprive them of the ownership of any part of the shores which they now possess as high up as the upper line of the late Spring Garden Water Works, and that every exertion will be made to strictly guard it from tenants whose business would cause any contamination whatever of the water supply; also, that the sewers and natural water courses which are already permitted to discharge their filth upon parts of the river front above designated be suppressed as early as possible. For if the shores be guarded there is no difficulty in carrying all such objectionable drainage to a point below the dam.

Very respectfully,

FREDERIC GRAFF,
Consulting Engineer.

THEODORE CUYLER, ESQ.,

Chairman of the Committee on City Property.

In answer to your note of this date, I have to state that in compliance with a request of certain citizens, convened at a meeting held on the second of January last, I became Treasurer of a fund, contributed by themselves and others, for the enlargement of the park at Fairmount. With a due appreciation of the importance of these grounds, as well for the preservation of the purity of the water as for the health and comfort of the citizens, I undertook the trust imposed upon me. The names of all the contributors submitted to Councils and now upon their Journals, with the amounts of their several subscriptions, were accurately transcribed from the original subscription book in my possession, which has always been open to public inspection. Out of the whole number of one hundred and forty contributors, one hundred and thirty-four subscriptions were received by me in full, leaving but six unsettled. Of these, one, a subscription by the estate of Henry Baring, was by its terms not payable at that time; two others, of one hundred dollars each, and three small subscriptions amounting together to eighty dollars, were con-

sidered at settlement as good, and accepted as cash by the former owner of the property. The entire fund was retained in my possession, with the understanding that in the event of the acceptance of the grounds by the City Councils, subject to certain specified mortgages, forming the balance of the purchase money, that the same should be paid over to the owner of the property; or, upon the non-acceptance of the land by the city, returned to the contributors.

The City Councils having with great unanimity accepted the property on the terms I have stated, in execution of the trust reposed in me, I paid over the whole amount of the funds in my hands as purchase money, and the Trustees selected by the contributors accepted a deed from the former owner.

A conveyance was then duly executed and delivered by them to the city, in conformity with the terms of acceptance agreed upon by Councils.

It may not be improper for me to say that the contributors to this fund relied upon the plighted faith of the city to fully carry out the ordinance of April, 1857, which declares "That these premises be and they are hereby dedicated to public use and enjoyment forever, as a park, in connection with and as a part of Fairmount Park."

I annex a list of the contributors. It embraces, as you will perceive, a large number of the heaviest tax-payers of Philadelphia. It also contains the names of a citizen of New York, who contributed \$500, and a citizen of New Jersey, who contributed \$100. A former resident of our city, now living in Europe, answered the circular of the committee by sending a subscription of \$1000.

Very respectfully,

THOS. RIDGWAY.

TO THEODORE CUYLER,

Dear Sir:—I am a resident of the Fifteenth Ward and well acquainted with the ground now forming Fairmount Park.—At the time of the purchase, I fully considered the question of price, and after mature deliberation came to the conclusion that the sum fixed upon was a fair one. Believing it to

be one of the most important improvements ever undertaken in Philadelphia, and being willing to further the project, I united in a contribution for the purchase of the property, and paid \$500. I did this in the fullest confidence that we had secured, by this act, the grounds for the citizens of Philadelphia, and preserved, in the only possible manner, the purity of our drinking water.

I am respectfully,

HIRAM MILLER.

October 12, 1857.

—

Philadelphia, October 12, 1857.

THEODORE CUYLER, ESQ.,

Chairman of Committee on City Property,

DEAR SIR:—Permit me to address you upon a subject of great public interest. It is the recent donation of the Sedgeley estate to the city upon certain conditions. The importance of the preservation of the water our citizens daily drink is so manifest—has been so freely discussed, and so universally admitted, as to render any further allusion to it at this time superfluous. Therefore the first question I present for your consideration is, was the Sedgeley estate necessary for the attainment of this important object? I say, it was, and is of incalculable value to our city, especially if the land lying between Lemon Hill and Fairmount is also secured, which no doubt it will be, through the same source this valuable donation was derived.

Then our citizens, both the rich and the poor, will have secured to them, if all is laid out as a park, the two most important elements to sustain life, *pure air and pure water*.

The next question is, what kind of buildings would have been erected upon this land and how soon, had it remained in its former possessor's hands? It could not be expected to remain long unimproved and unproductive, when far above this point, on the river, much of the land has been improved. The buildings this land would be occupied with, from my knowledge of the locality and the wants of the neighborhood, would be factories, workshops, breweries, tenements for the operatives in them, and houses most probably erected for the accommodation of several families in each. The amount of impurities

from such sources which would find their way into the river, and contaminate the water we daily drink, would be beyond all present calculation. It may be said that improvements of such a character or of any kind would be a remote affair. Not so in enterprising hands. Look at the number of houses which have been erected within a few squares east of this property, in the last few years.

The final question is—the value of the land when it was donated to the city. The answer to this, verified as it can be from various sources, will fully confirm the wisdom of Councils in accepting the property upon the conditions enjoined. Mr. Dreer purchased Sedgeley after one of those terrible revulsions somewhat similar to the present. I have no doubt of his ability to have sold portions of this land at rates far exceeding the price per acre sold to the contributors who donated it to the city.

This opinion is founded upon actual sales that have been made upon both sides of the river, at prices varying from \$4,000 to \$7,000 per acre. Of course, I am speaking of *lots* sold at these rates. I sold a lot on the west side of the river, at over the highest rate named, which has been improved and would command a still higher price. A portion of the Yarnall estate, opposite Sedgeley, sold at over \$5,000 per acre three years ago; another portion of the same estate has been sold for building purposes, at over \$6,000 per acre. Most of the improvements made in this neighborhood and some distance beyond, have been made upon land which cost the present owners over \$5,000 per acre. I would not sell my entire estate, which is on the west side of the river, and above Sedgeley, for \$2,000 per acre to-day. I am no speculator, having resided upon my farm for 20 years. Am in no way connected with this noble bequest, yet from daily observation of the vast amount of impurities washed from the comparatively unimproved land which borders the Schuylkill, I most heartily concurred in the wisdom of Councils accepting this property, and as a tax-paying citizen hope most sincerely that Councils will forthwith take measures for the opening of the whole of the Fairmount Park to the people, and do all, besides, within their power to preserve the purity of the water we are compelled daily to drink.

With much respect,

Your obedient servant,

WM. S. TORR.

TO THEODORE CUYLER, ESQ.,

Chairman of the Committee on City Property.

I am a resident of Coates street near Fairmount, and am well acquainted with the property, now belonging to the city, forming the northern portion of Fairmount Park. This land has a large river front and an extensive front on the railroad. I consider that the price paid for this land by the contributors to the fund for its purchase, a low one, and I would have been willing to unite with a company to take it at the rate it sold for. The property is undoubtedly worth far more than the mortgages upon it, and to the City of Philadelphia, I consider it of the greatest importance. It should be preserved forever as a protection to the water we drink. With a full understanding of all the circumstances attending its purchase, I became a contributor of five hundred dollars, which I paid to Mr. Ridgway, the Treasurer of the fund.

D. T. MOORE.

October 10, 1857.

—

October 14th, 1857.

THEO. CUYLER, ESQ.,

DEAR SIR,—May I express to you my earnest hope, that the Councils will make early provision for paying the interest on the mortgage of Mr. Cox, upon the ground recently conveyed to the city for the purposes of a park.

The land in question was purchased at a low price, the subscriptions made by our citizens were most liberal, and the possession and control of the land is absolutely essential to the health of the people of our city. My interest in this matter is simply that of a citizen, but it is cordial, and must be my excuse for thus trespassing upon your time.

Very truly yours,

WM. D. KELLEY.

—

Philadelphia, Oct. 13, 1857.

DEAR SIR:—I became a contributor to the fund for the purchase of the land lying between Lemon Hill and the Spring Garden Water Works, with a view not only to the forming a

public park for the people of the city of Philadelphia, but to preserve as far as possible the purity of the Schuylkill water.

My subscription was duly paid to Mr. Ridgway, the Treasurer of the fund.

The city having accepted the land and pledged itself to hold it forever for the free use of the people as a pleasure ground, is bound in my judgment to redeem its pledge.

My subscription was made with a full knowledge of the price agreed to be paid for the land, and at the time of the purchase I did not regard the price as being out of the way.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES PAGE.

THEODORE CUYLER, Esq.,

Chairman Committee Councils.

—

No. 204 South Fifth street, 14th Oct. 1857.

THEODORE CUYLER, Esq.,

Chairman of Committee of City Property.

DEAR SIR:—I take pleasure in saying that I cheerfully united in the movement made last winter to secure the thirty-three acres known as ‘Sedgeley,’ so as to unite the same to Lemon Hill, to form a park for the people on the banks of the Schuylkill. From personal knowledge, and from inquiries made at the time from those in whose opinion I had confidence, I was, and am now, satisfied that the price paid was a fair one; and in view of the immediate and prospective advantage to the city, a very moderate one.

My connection with the matter I regard as one of the satisfactory retrospects of my life. As I understand, the validity of the private subscriptions has been doubted, I can say that my own, \$100, was paid, before the deed to the city, in a check on the Philadelphia Bank (now in my possession cancelled) to Thomas Ridgway, Esq., Treasurer of the fund.



I should consider it most discreditable to the city, should this property, in violation of the terms of acceptance, be lost to the people, by a sheriff's sale.

I am,
Yours, very truly,
GEO. W. BIDDLE.

—

Philadelphia, 10th month 15th, 1857.

THEODORE CUYLER.

RESPECTED FRIEND:—I am cognizant of ground having been sold in the vicinity of Sedgeley Park at \$1 50 to \$2 per foot.

Respectfully,
HENRY HAINES,
Surveyor of 17th District.

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